



SECTION 2:

# THE 2012/2013 STRATEGIC INITIATIVES

## The 2012/2013 Strategic Initiatives

The role of the Action Agenda is not just to lay out all of the work that must be done. It also has to prioritize those critical areas where we know we have the opportunity, and the need, to act now to make meaningful progress. Cutting across the entire Action Agenda, three strategic initiatives meet this need. They are focused strategic sets of related actions where we can address the most significant problems, with viable solutions, in a way that will create meaningful improvements for Puget Sound.

Strategic initiatives are meant to deliver progress at a substantial level on the priority actions – now. They will be the focus of Partnership spending and resources, and of our efforts to increase funding, seek changes in policy, report success and challenges, and educate and engage citizens in the recovery effort.

The three strategic initiatives are:

- **Prevention of pollution from urban stormwater runoff** – this is an immense challenge, and although we have many of the tools and technologies for stormwater, we need to make much fuller use of them if we are to stop contamination from flowing into the Sound;
- **Protection and restoration of habitat** – we must stop destroying habitat, protect what we have left and substantially restore the critical habitats that we have lost;
- **Recovery of shellfish beds** – Shellfish harvesting is both a treaty right for tribes and a vital industry in our region. It is also a treasured tradition for countless northwest families. Shellfish health begins on land, through reduction of pollution from rural and agricultural lands and maintenance and repair of failing septic tanks.

The specific actions to include within each strategic initiative ~~will be~~ were drawn from the strategies and actions developed during the Action Agenda update process and informed by high-level policy discussions such as the Governor’s Shellfish Initiative, the ECB policy statement on stormwater, and the process to address shortcomings in the implementation of salmon recovery efforts identified by tribes and NOAA in 2011. They ~~are under development with partners and will be added to the final Action Agenda~~ were developed by Subcommittees of the Ecosystem Coordination Board and reviewed and adopted by the Leadership Council.

The Strategic Initiatives are described in detail in the Action Agenda Highlights document. For ease of reference the content is summarized here in Tables 1-3. In addition, throughout the Action Agenda symbols illustrate the sub-strategies and actions that are part of each Strategic Initiative.



**Prevention of pollution from urban stormwater runoff**



**Protection and restoration of habitat**



**Recovery of shellfish beds**



**Table 1: Prevention of Pollution from Urban Stormwater Runoff - Strategies and Actions**

| STRATEGY | #   | SUB-STRATEGY   | NTA # | NTA   |
|----------|-----|--|-------|---|
| C        | 1.1 | Implement and strengthen authorities and programs to prevent toxic chemicals from entering the Puget Sound environment.  | 3     | <u>Fish Consumption Rates and Sediment Management Standards</u> . In 2012 Ecology will propose draft rule language that will address human health; protect ecological receptors from bioaccumulation; and include freshwater sediment standards and develop Implementation Tools for meeting Water Quality Standards based on revised human health criteria.  |
| C        | 2.1 | Manage urban runoff at the basin and watershed scale.  | 1     | <u>Watershed Based Stormwater Management</u> . PSP in consultation with Ecology and with guidance from the Ecosystem Coordination Board, will evaluate the feasibility, costs, and effectiveness of expanding the existing, municipal stormwater jurisdiction-by-jurisdiction permit approach, using "general permits," to include additional watershed-based municipal stormwater management practices. PSP will complete the evaluation and provide to Ecology for consideration by February 2013.  |
| C        | 2.2 | Prevent problems from new development at the site and subdivision scale.   | 1     | <u>NPDES Municipal Permits</u> . Ecology will issue municipal permits for western Washington and provide financial assistance to permittees for implementation, particularly for code changes, stormwater system mapping, operations and maintenance, inspections and enforcement. This will require additional resources to Ecology for permit oversight, technical assistance, and enforcement. Ecology will provide incentives to NPDES permittees who, by interlocal agreement, lead or carry out regional or watershed scale NPDES implementation. |
| C        | 2.2 | Prevent problems from new development at the site and subdivision scale.   | 3     | <u>Stormwater Management Outside Permitted Areas</u> . Ecology, in coordination with the state Department of Health, will identify two high priority shellfish growing areas degraded by urban stormwater discharges and works with local governments and other key parties to reduce these impacts to the areas.   |
| C        | 2.3 | Fix problems caused by existing development.   | 1     | <u>Stormwater Retrofit Projects</u> . Ecology will lead a process to identify high priority retrofit projects that will contribute to the recovery of Puget Sound and complete conceptual design to a stage sufficient to seek project implementation funding. The work will build on retrofit prioritization work by WSDOT, King County and others, and will be replicable in other urban and suburban areas around the Sound.   |
| C        | 2.4 | Control sources of pollutants.   | 1     | <u>Compliance Assurance Program</u> . Ecology and local governments will increase inspection, technical assistance, and enforcement programs for high-priority businesses and at construction sites.  |
| C        | 2.5 | Provide focused stormwater-related education, training, and assistance.  | 1     | <u>LID Training and Certification</u> . Ecology will provide focused training for local government staff on LID project review, and inspections and approvals, as well as to local government staff and private sector on maintenance. Develop new professional certification for stormwater maintenance specialists. Provide business staff and contractors with training on source control, spill recognition, spill response, and erosion control.   |
| C        | 2.5 | Provide focused stormwater-related education, training, and assistance.  | 2     | <u>Education for the Next Generation of Stormwater Professionals</u> . [WHO] develops a near-term plan for academic course work, including tribal history and civics, for future stormwater professionals that emphasizes continuing improvements in stormwater management in the context of the larger issues of sustainable water resource management and climate change.   |
| D        | 6.1 | Implement a long-term, highly visible, coordinated public-awareness effort using the Puget Sound Starts Here brand to increase public understanding of Puget Sound's health, status, and threats. Conduct regionally-scaled communications to provide a foundation for local communications efforts. Conduct locally-scaled communications to engage residents in local issues and recovery efforts. | 1     | <u>Phase 2 of Puget Sound Starts Here</u> . PSP and partners implement Phase 2 of <i>Puget Sound Starts Here</i> campaign. PSP, STORM and Ecology ensure that messages reflect the demography, regional identity and issues facing the Puget Sound.   |

**Table 2: Protection and Restoration of Habitat - Strategies and Actions**

| STRATEGY | #   | SUB-STRATEGY  | NTA # | NTA  |
|----------|-----|---|-------|--|
| A        | 1.2 | Support local governments to adopt and implement plans, regulations, and policies consistent with protection and recovery targets, and incorporate climate change forecasts.  | 1     | <u>Land Use Planning Barriers, BMPs and Example Policies</u> . By December 2012, Ecology and Commerce, working with local governments, will identify the primary barriers to incorporating policies consistent with implementation of the Action Agenda into local land use planning and decisions and identify best practices and assistance needed to overcome these barriers. This will address implementation of protection strategies, encouraging compact growth patterns, increased density, water quality standards, redevelopment, and rural lands protection. By December 2012, Ecology and Commerce will distribute example growth policies that include best practices that are consistent with protection and recovery targets and the Growth Management and Shoreline Management Acts. |
| A        | 1.3 | Improve, strengthen, and streamline implementation and enforcement of laws, plans, regulations, and permits consistent with protection and recovery targets.  | 1     | <u>ECB Address Regulatory Exemptions</u> . The ECB will address regulatory exemptions to provide effective oversight and mitigation sequencing for activities that impact the ecosystem (e.g., HPA and SMA).   |
| A        | 4.2 | Provide infrastructure and incentives to accommodate new and re-development within urban growth areas.  |       | <i>All of sub-strategy A4.1 is a priority for the habitat protection and restoration strategic initiative.</i>   |
| A        | 5.1 | Improve data and information to accelerate floodplain protection, restoration, and flood hazard management.   | 1     | <u>Floodplain Protection and Policy Team Actions</u> . PSP will advance floodplain protection and restoration by facilitating actions, policy changes, and program changes necessary to reduce critical barriers to habitat protection and restoration. Funding will be focused on the places that have the greatest potential to recover floodplain functions.  |
| A        | 5.3 | Protect and maintain intact and functional floodplains.   | 4     | PSP will continue to work with the Army Corps of Engineers to craft a regional variance to their vegetation on levees policy.  |
| A        | 6.1 | Implement high priority projects identified in each salmon recovery watershed's three-year work plan.   |       | <i>All of sub-strategy A6.1 is a priority for the habitat protection and restoration strategic initiative.</i>   |
| A        | 7.1 | Update Puget Sound instream flow rules to encourage conservation  |       | <i>All of sub-strategy A7.1 is a priority for the habitat protection and restoration strategic initiative.</i>   |
| B        | 1.3 | Improve, strengthen, and streamline implementation and enforcement of laws, regulations, and permits that protect the marine and nearshore ecosystems and estuaries.  | 2     | <u>Hydraulic Code Rules Revision</u> . By December 2014, WDFW will use best available science to revise Hydraulic Code Rules (chapter 220-110 WAC) and clarify conditions under which hydraulic projects must be conducted to prevent or mitigate the impacts to fish life and habitat.  |
| B        | 2.1 | Permanently protect priority nearshore physical and ecological processes and habitat, including shorelines, migratory corridors, and vegetation particularly in sensitive areas such as eelgrass beds and bluff backed beaches. | 1     | <u>Protect 10% of Bluff-Backed Beaches</u> . PSP will promote acquisitions, easements, or other protective covenants to permanently protect at least 10% of bluff-backed beaches with high sediment supply or other priority nearshore habitats facing potential shoreline development pressure by June 2014.  |
| B        | 2.2 | Implement prioritized nearshore and estuary restoration projects and accelerate projects on public lands.   | 1     | <u>Implementation of Projects Identified by PSNERP</u> . By December 2014, DFW and the Corps will advance implementation of projects identified by Puget Sound Nearshore Ecosystem Restoration Project (PSNERP), including those described in the Strategic Restoration Conceptual Engineering Final Design Report. Implementation will occur both through Corps programs as anticipated through the General Investigation process, and through other non-Corps federal, state, tribal and local programs by 2013.   |

| STRATEGY | #   | SUB-STRATEGY  | NTA # | NTA   |
|----------|-----|---|-------|---|
| B        | 2.3 | Remove armoring, and use soft armoring replacement or landward setbacks when armoring fails, needs repair, is non protective, and during redevelopment. | 1     | <u>Homeowner Incentives for Landward Setbacks</u> . PSP will convene a process with partners to develop and recommend incentives that help homeowners permanently remove armoring and encourage setback of houses by June 2014. Incentives could include, but would not be limited to financial, regulatory, low interest loans or grants. This work will help restore nearshore processes, promote landward retreat of homes facing sea level rise, and promote progress toward shoreline armoring target. |
| C        | 8.1 | Prevent and reduce the risk of oil spills.  | 2     | <u>Evaluate Risk Assessments for Update Needs</u> . Ecology will evaluate existing Puget Sound marine transportation oil spill risk assessments, identify any gaps in marine safety and work with experts to develop and apply appropriate risk reduction measures.   |

**Table 3: Recovery of Shellfish Beds - Strategies and Actions**

| STRATEGY | #   | SUB-STRATEGY   | NTA # | NTA   |
|----------|-----|--|-------|---|
| B        | 3.1 | Protect intact marine ecosystems particularly in sensitive areas and for sensitive species.  | 2     | <u>Outfall Strategy on State-Owned Aquatic Lands</u> . DNR, in collaboration with Tribal Governments, Ecology, DFW, and DOH, will develop and implement a strategy to reduce impacts from outfalls on state-owned aquatic lands in Puget Sound.   |
| C        | 1.1 | Implement and strengthen authorities and programs to prevent toxic chemicals from entering the Puget Sound environment.                              | 7     | <u>Water Quality Enforcement</u> . (Owner needs to be identified) Increase the capacity for enforcement, and enforce all regulations pertaining to the discharge of pathogens and contaminants to the waters of the state to ensure achievement of approved shellfish growing water certification.  |
| C        | 1.5 | Control wastewater and other sources of pollution such as oil and toxics from boats and vessels.   | 1     | <u>No Discharge Zone Evaluation and Petition</u> . By December 2013 Ecology and DOH, in coordination with the Department of Natural Resources, will conduct an evaluation and draft a petition to EPA to establish a NDZ for commercial and recreational vessels to eliminate bacteria, nutrients, and pathogens from being discharged to all or parts of Puget Sound. The evaluation will include researching petition requirements; gathering background information and pump-out station data for the petition; identifying, reaching out to, and getting input of stakeholders; identifying and prioritizing which areas of the Puget Sound are feasible for petition; and evaluating how to implement the designation. |
| C        | 3.2 | Ensure compliance with regulatory programs designed to reduce, control, or eliminate pollution from working farms.                                   | 1     | <u>Priority Areas for Voluntary Incentive and Regulatory Programs</u> . The State Conservation Commission and the Washington State Departments of Agriculture, Ecology, and Health will identify priority areas to better target and coordinate implementation of voluntary incentive and regulatory programs for rural landowners, small-acreage landowners, and working farms.  |
| C        | 5.3 | Improve and expand funding for on-site sewage systems and local OSS programs.  | 1     | <u>Regional OSS Homeowner Loan Program</u> . DOH, Ecology, and PSP will help evaluate options and support proposals to fund a unified, self-sustaining, low-interest loan program in the Puget Sound region to help OSS owners repair and replace their systems by June 2014.   |
| C        | 5.3 | Improve and expand funding for on-site sewage systems and local OSS programs.  | 2     | <u>Regional OSS Program Funding Source</u> . DOH will evaluate approaches and mechanisms (e.g., a regional flush tax or sewer surcharge) to establish a regional funding source for local OSS management plans and programs by June 2014.   |
| C        | 7.1 | Improve water quality to prevent downgrade and achieve upgrades of important current tribal, commercial and recreational shellfish harvesting areas. | 3     | <u>Pollution Control Action Team</u> . Ecology, working with DOH, WSDA, EPA and the Tribes will form a Pollution Control Action Team (PCAT) to respond quickly when areas are identified where water quality problems threaten shellfish areas. They will initiate community outreach and education, pollution identification, inspection, technical assistance to local agencies and landowners and finally, enforcement. The team will focus its work in priority areas and support PIC programs where they are established. The first effort will be in Drayton Harbor and Portage Bay.  |

| STRATEGY | #   | SUB-STRATEGY   | NTA # | NTA   |
|----------|-----|--|-------|---|
| C        | 7.3 | Ensure environmentally responsible shellfish aquaculture based on sound science.         | 3     | <u>Shellfish Model Permitting Program</u> . The Department of Ecology will work with the Governor's Office of Regulatory Assistance (ORA) to lead and facilitate a state team to develop and implement a Model Permitting Program that ensures early and continued coordination among state and federal agencies, tribes and local governments for permitting and licensing of shellfish aquaculture. |
| C        | 9.4 | Develop and implement local and tribal pollution identification and correction programs. | 1     | <u>Pollution Identification and Correction Programs</u> . DOH and Ecology, in collaboration with EPA and counties, will create sustainable pollution identification and correction programs (PIC) that are designed to improve and protect water quality.   |